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HOUSE MEMORIAL 36

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2008

INTRODUCED BY

Ben Lujan

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO INTRODUCE
LEGISLATION TO AWARD DR. VICTOR WESTPHALL A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD
MEDAL IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES.

WHEREAS, in order to honor those who fought and died in
the Vietnam war, and to give the survivors a spiritual home,
Dr. Victor Westphall built the Vietnam veterans peace and
brotherhood chapel, which would later become the Vietnam
veterans national memorial state park at Angel Fire; and

WHEREAS, in building the Vietnam veterans peace and
brotherhood chapel, Dr. Westphall honored the courage and
sacrifice of his own son, Victor David Westphall, III, who gave
his life in the Vietnam war; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Westphall built the Vietnam veterans peace
and brotherhood chapel in 1968, a period in which the nation

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1 was divided over the war being fought by the United States in
2 Vietnam; and

3 WHEREAS, Americans in 1968 were deeply divided over the
4 Vietnam war, while the soldiers returning from the Vietnam war
5 were often shunned and scapegoated as blameworthy for the
6 United States' policies in southeast Asia; and

7 WHEREAS, in being the first to build a memorial honoring
8 those who had fallen in the service of their country, Dr.
9 Westphall bravely made a stand in the name of honor during a
10 time of great social unrest; and

11 WHEREAS, the congressional gold medal is the nation's most
12 distinguished award given to civilians, and it is an honor
13 befitting Dr. Westphall's acts of outstanding principle,
14 courage and service in building the Vietnam veterans peace and
15 brotherhood chapel;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
17 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the members of
18 the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to
19 introduce legislation to award the congressional gold medal to
20 Dr. Victor Westphall in recognition of his great service to the
21 nation; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional
24 delegation and to Governor Richardson.